

Message Text

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43

ACTION AID-31

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4921

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 16453

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB JA XC

SUBJ: SOHYO TEAM TO SOUTHEAST ASIA SEEKS MEETINGS WITH AAFLI REPS

1. TWO REPS OF SOHYO'S INSTITUTE FOR ASIAN LABOR STUDIES, INSTITUTE DIRECTOR AND SOHYO CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER NORIHISA ARAI AND HIS ASSISTANT FUKUMOTO, ADVISED EMBOFF NOV 13 THAT THEY PLANNING TRIP TO COUNTRIES OF INFO POSTS DURING JAN 1976. THEY SAID THAT WHILE MAIN PURPOSE OF VISIT IS TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH AND COLLECT INFORMATION ON SEA LABOR MOVEMENTS, THEY ALSO HOPE TO MEET WITH AAFLI REPS AND ARO HEADQUARTERS AS WELL. THEY EXPLAINED TRIP AS PART OF EFFORT TO PROMOTE SOHYO PROJECT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS IN AREA IN ORDER TO AWAKEN SOHYO AFFILIATES INTEREST IN SEA LABOR MOVEMENTS.

2. COMMENT: PROJECTED ACTIVITIES IN SEA OF SOHYO AND ITS AFFILIATES MAY PROVE TO BE A MIXED BLESSING AS FAR AS US INTERESTS ARE CONCERNED. ON ONE HAND, SOHYO MODERATES, PARTICULARLY ICFTU AFFILIATED ZENTEI
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(POSTAL WORKERS), HAVE LONG BEEN URGING SOHYO TO

BORADEN ITS INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS BEYOND ITS LONG
STANDING TIES WITH COMMUNIST UNIONS, AND IN FACT WERE
RESPONSIBLE FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF ASIAN LABOR INSTITUTE
IN 1974. ARAI IS ZENTEI ALUMNUS. ON OTHER HAND,
IN "POST VIETNAM" PERIOD, SOHYO APPEARS TO BE SUDDENLY
DISCOVERING POLITICAL ATTRACTIVENESS OF WOOING NON-COMMUNIST
SEA LABOR UNIONS AND IS ATTEMPTING TO CATCH UP WITH
EFFORTS OF ITS ARCH RIVAL DOMEI IN THIS FIELD. THEREFORE
REGARDLESS OF THEIR PERSONAL SYMPATHIES, ARAI AND
FUKUMOTO UNLIKELY TO USE ANYTHING THEY LEARN ON THEIR
SEA TRIP TO ASSIST ANY POSSIBLE AFL-CIO-DOMEI JOINT
EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN DOMEI TRADE MOVEMENT IN
ASIA. WE RECOMMEND THAT IF AAFLI REPS ARE
ASKED TO MEET WITH SOHYO TEAM, THEY RECEIVE THEM CORDIALLY
BUT NOT BE TOO FORTHCOMING.
HODGSON

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